

P R E S S   R E L E A S E

For release: Tuesday, March 17th, 1970

Newark, New Jersey-----Harry L. Wheeler, candidate for mayor of the city of Newark in the coming May 12th municipal election, today issued a statement in which he branded Mayor Addonizio's "TV Debates Only" challenge as "sm-tocism" and an adroit scheme designed to make it appear that he (Addonizio) wants to have a full airing of the issues of the campaign.

Wheeler stated, "I'm indeed happy that Mayor Addonizio has finally seen fit to respond affirmatively to my challenge to debate the issues of this campaign (my letter is attached). It is regrettable, however, that from the very outset he (Addonizio) has attempted to seriously limit the number of debates by insisting on 'TV Debates Only'."

Wheeler further state, "Mayor Addonizio's belated attempt to demand time from the television industry for a series of debates represents a clear cut case of him 'following the leader'. It is a matter of record that on February 11th, I wrote a letter (a copy of same is attached along with a list of the personages) to the major radio and television stations of the greater Newark-Metropolitan area urging them to sponsor a series of debates. The noteworthiness of my letter is contained in the fact that it was directed to both the television industry and the radio industry.

Furthermore, I recently received several favorable responses (copies of the letters are attached) to my letter from radio stations in which they indicated a 'willingness and desire' to sponsor a series of debates."

"Does this mean," Wheeler continued, "that Mayor Addonizio will refuse to participate because the debates happened to be sponsored by radio stations?"

Wheeler added: "The thesis (eliminate 'packed of houses' by candidates with the 'extremist cast of supporters') advanced by Mayor Addonizio for having 'TV debates only' represents spurious reasoning of the first magnitude."

"If Mayor Addonizio," Wheeler continued, "is not afraid to face the wrath of Newark's electorate then his concern and fear of 'packed houses' can be eliminated by sincere, intelligent planning on the part of the candidates or their representatives. As a matter of fact, a simple plan of providing each candidate with an equal number of tickets for his supporters, for each community debate would certainly solve the problem of packed houses."

Wheeler concluded: "Mayor Addonizio's attempt to escape the wrath of Newark's citizenry by calling for 'TV Debates Only' is a flimsy facade designed to produce a situation similar to the recent New York mayoral race, in which the debates were extremely limited and of a 'last minute' nature."